

Message Text

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TAGS:OVIP, PFOR, PINS, RP (MACAPAGAL, DIOSDADO P.)

SUBJECT:U.S. VISIT OF EX-PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL

REF: STATE 254477

1. MACAPAGAL AND FAMILY ARRIVED NEW YORK NOVEMBER 5 AND WERE MET BY HULEN AND GOP CONGEN OFFICIALS. MACAPAGAL APPRECIATIVE OF USG INTEREST SHOWN IN HIS VISIT AND SECURITY AND PROTOCOL ARRANGEMENTS. HE DID NOT SUGGEST MEETINGS WITH HIGH USG OFFICIALS AND, SINCE HE WILL ONLY TRANSIT WASHINGTON FROM FRIENDSHIP TO NATIONAL AIRPORTS, SUCH MEETINGS ARE NOT LIKELY. HE WILL MEET MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR WHILE VISITING BOSTON NEXT WEEK.

2. IN PRIVATE MEETING WITH HULEN LATER IN DAY, MACAPAGAL SAID PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP IS TO STUDY HOW PRESENT PHILIPPINE SITUATION IS REGARDED BY OTHER COUNTRIES. HE DID NOT RESPOND WHEN ASKED IF HE HAD REACHED FIRM CONCLUSIONS. IN OTHER COMMENTS, HOWEVER, HE INDICATED OPPOSITION TO MARTIAL LAW REGIME. SINCE MARCOS HAS MADE HIMSELF INDISPENSABLE IN PRESENT SCHEME OF THINGS, HIS CONTINUATION IN POWER WOULD HAVE TO BE ASSUMED BUT MACAPAGAL IS CONCERNED THAT MARCOS MAY HAVE MADE PROVISIONS WHICH WOULD PASS POWER ON TO MRS. MARCOS AND EVENTUALLY TO FERDINAND, JR., OR, ALTER-
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NATIVELY, TO HAND-PICKED GROUP OF MARCOS FOLLOWERS. EITHER

ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE VERY BAD SINCE IT WOULD LIKELY DEFER INDEFINITELY RETURN TO U.S.-FOSTERED DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS REGULAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL SUCCESSION IN CASE MARCOS SHOULD RETIRE OR DISAPPEAR FROM POLITICAL SCENE.

3. TURNING TO PHILIPPINE INTERNAL POLITICS, MACAPAGAL CLAIMED GREAT MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS NOW WISH END TO MARTIAL LAW AND ARE PUTTING UP WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION ONLY BECAUSE OF FEAR. HE THINKS THE UNRESTRAINED GREED OF PRESIDENT AND IMELDA, WHICH IS WIDELY KNOWN AND RESENTED, IS A MAJOR WEAKNESS OF THE REGIME. NEVERTHELESS, WITH MILITARY FORCES BOUGHT OFF BY MARCOS' FAVORS, AND WITH ALL CIVIL POWER CONCENTRATED IN MALACANANG, NO EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION OF PUBLIC'S OPPOSITION CAN BE EXPECTED. IT THEREFORE UP TO UNITED STATES, WHICH HAD ESTABLISHED AND PROMOTED DEMOCRACY IN PHILIPPINES, TO ENCOURAGE MARCOS TO MOVE TOWARDS ITS RESTORATION.

4. MACAPAGAL WENT EXTENSIVELY INTO BACKGROUND OF MARTIAL LAW, SUGGESTING THAT DISORDERS USED TO JUSTIFY IT HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY CONTRIVED BY MARCOS AND THAT MOST ILLS OF PHILIPPINE BODY POLITIC IN EARLY 1970'S COULD BE TRACED BACK TO MARCOS' DETERMINATION TO RETAIN POWER AT ALL COSTS. THIS HAD LED MARCOS IN 1967 AND 1969 ELECTIONS TO RESORT TO UNSRESTRAINED TERRORISM AND CORRUPTION. IN SOME CASES, MARCOS HENCHMEN ARMED FOR THESE PURPOSES HAD COME TO POSE A THREAT EVEN TO THEIR MASTER, E.G., HE THOUGHT FORMER CONGRESSMAN CHRISOLOGO HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED BECAUSE HE DEFIED MARCOS LATER IN MAINTAINING A BLOCKADE OF TOBACCO SHIPMENTS.

5. DESPITE THESE PRIVATE COMMENTS, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT MACAPAGAL WILL TREAD LIGHTLY IN PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE REGIME. HE WILL SPEAK AT BOSTON MEETING OF ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, AT WHICH FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO IS ALSO SPEAKING. OTHERWISE, MACAPAGAL SEEMS MORE INTENT ON PRIVATE CONTACTS THAN PUBLIC EXPOSURE WHILE IN THE U.S. HE DID STATE THAT HE HAD SEEN NUMEROUS IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE BUT NAMED ONLY PRESIDENT CONFIDENTIAL

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ASAD OF SYRIA AND KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN. BOTH, HE SAID, WERE SYMPATHETIC TO PHILIPPINE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE MUSLIM PROBLEM, BUT FELT AN OBLIGATION TO HELP THEIR FELLOW MUSLIMS.

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